

SIMPLE DIRECTIONS



USE THE STEPS
TRAVEL BEYOND THIS POINT W/O
A SPONSOR IS NOT ADVISED

STEPS 4, 5, 6 and 7

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Our Thanks to...

Ken D. of the One Way Group, Los Angeles, CA,

Barefoot Bob, barefootsworld.org,

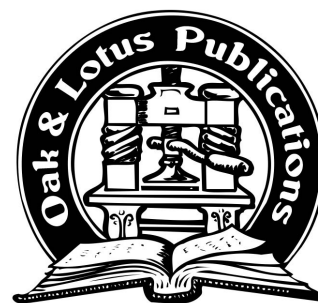
The many speakers on 12-Step process who have spoken in meetings, conventions, round-ups, workshops and classes (available for free download through xa-speakers.org),

Cliff D., Copy Editor

This is not presented as, nor intended to be, the *only* approach to a Fourth Step Inventory. It is based on Chapter Five of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* with additional material as developed by various speakers available for free on <http://xa-speakers.org>.

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This guide is not the idea of one person.

"Circuit speakers" at conventions of Alcoholics Anonymous have added their impact to the Inventory process. Dozens of excellent speakers are available for free download from xa-speakers.org. These represent hundreds of sober-years of experience in the process of 12-Step recovery and the process of working those Steps. Additional material was made available on the internet through several excellent sources of documents, podcasts, workshop materials, speaker recordings and original essays to even more of our shared experience strength and hope.

A list of sites is included in the back of this book and you are encouraged to explore these web sites, but not at the expense of postponing your Fourth Step.

Above all you will have the experience of your Sponsor to help you overcome your personal obstacles to the massive housecleaning and correction that began when you accepted the truth of the First Step.

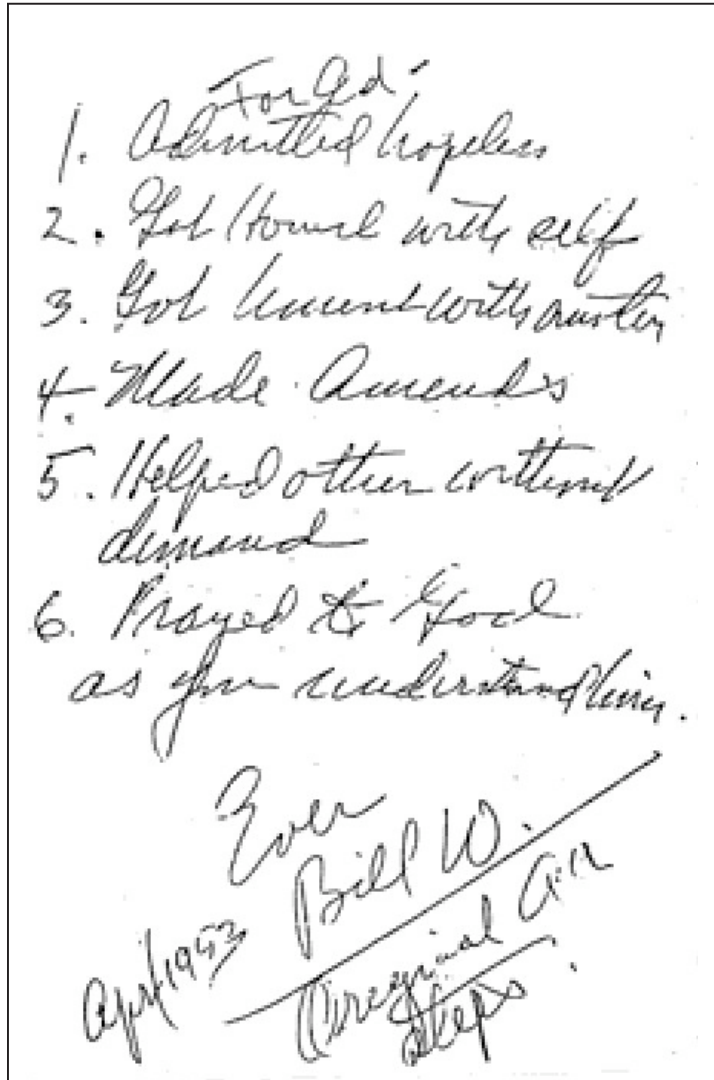
If your Sponsor says anything that conflicts with this guide go with what your Sponsor has to say for your personal program

There is only one way to do the Inventory wrong, and that is to not do one!

Joe A.
Anonymous Review
Raleigh, NC

Before Step Four

The AA Steps owe a great deal of their structure to the six steps of the original Oxford Group, a Christian fellowship dedicated to the ideal fellowship of the First Century church. When asked about The Oxford Group's "Six Steps," Bill W. wrote the following scrap to explain their process:



Our Steps 4 through 9 are a clarification of the Oxford Groups' simple Step Four "Make Amends." The expansion was intended to break down the process to allow an alcoholic to do each part of the process and do it as thoroughly as possible.

If you have made it to Step Three, your sponsor and your meetings will confirm that the next Step is to be taken immediately. In the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, the direction begins in Chapter Five, at the bottom of page 63,

"Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted."

It is the intent of this guide to help make a searching and moral inventory as guided by the book.

Steps One, Two and Three did not create the problem - they are the statements of the truth of your disease and your situation. They are the beginning of the leveling of pride and ego, which we are told will become a lifelong process. In each of these steps you begin the difficult process of telling the truth.

You did not become an alcoholic because you admitted to Step One. You simply admitted what was already true.

You did not create a High Power through Step Two, you simply admitted to the truth that you are not God or the Higher Power of your personal understanding.

In Step Three you do not achieve anything beyond taking that deep breath to begin The Work of recovery.

"The Work" is often referenced in AA meetings, but sometimes people can go for years without knowing what "The Work" is. For simplicity, let us take a moment to define "The Work" for your own progress.

The big book is clearly divided between the basic text of the front (Cover through Page 164, or Page 181 to include Dr. Bob's Nightmare, depending on who you are talking to) and the stories in the back.

But on closer examination we find a second structure in the book. The area from the Cover through Page 52 are a summary for Step One - defining alcoholism and the alcoholic, with an introduction to the spiritual nature of our disease.

On Page 52, although discussion of the meat of Step Two has already begun, there is a paragraph that gives the summation of "our lives had become unmanageable." It is sometimes called The Bedevilmnts*.

The previous pages discuss the changes seen in the 1930s as the result of technological progress. The authors and early members of our fellowship all came from a time when "man will never fly" had been changed to include regularly scheduled flights to China from San Francisco. They had seen horses and carriages give way to automobiles. They had seen communications move from newspapers and telegraphy to newsreels, movies, radio and telephones.

The paragraph on Page 52 says:

"We had to ask ourselves why we shouldn't apply to our human problems this same readiness to change the point of view. We were having trouble with personal relationships, we couldn't control our emotional natures, we were a prey to misery and depression, we couldn't make a living, we had a feeling of uselessness, we were full of fear, we were unhappy, we couldn't seem to be of real help to other people - was not a basic solution of these bedevilments more important than whether we should see newsreels of lunar flight? Of course it was."*

At each of the statements it is best to pause, to ask if that part of the paragraph applies to you.

- . *Were you having trouble with personal relationships?*
- . *Were you able to control your emotions?*
- . *Were you prey to misery and depression?*
- . *Could you make a living?*
- . *Were you full of fear?*
- . *Were you unhappy?*
- . *Were you able to be of real help to other people?*
- . *Do you see that your solution of these bedevilments is more important than other pursuits?*

The Bedevilments on Page 52 are the end of Step One and the opening to the work of Step Two.

At the bottom page 88 you are at the end of Step Eleven.

Page 89, the chapter "Working With Others" is the beginning of Step Twelve, which continues through the rest of the book, including the stories in the back. Those stories are people sharing their Experience, Strength and Hope with you as their Twelve Step call on you.

The 36 pages from page 52 to page 88 contain Steps Two through Step Eleven. These pages, these Steps are "The Work."

Do the Work and you get the result!

You are the only one who can say if you are willing to move forward, but as with the rest of your work in the Twelve Steps, it is best to have an advisor, a "native guide" for the new territory - a Sponsor.

Understand that many of the men and women with double-digit sobriety report that they have not seen anyone start a Fourth Step and hesitate before beginning their amends in Step Nine and stay sober!

The process requires completion. Alcoholics are great beginners, but not so good on finishing what they start. If you make the commitment, then take the action and the results will follow. Finish this process!

You will never feel finished. The book tells us this is "the beginning of a lifelong process," but it also tells us that this way of life is "a design for living that really works."

It is suggested that you follow the direction of your sponsor. If you are not using a sponsor, it is important that you have someone who can guide you - do not attempt this process on your own. You can never see your eye with that same eye. You must use a mirror, and your sponsor is your mirror.

- . *The pressure built by performing the Inventory can only be reduced through the thorough examination and organization of what comes out of it. Your sponsor will help you organize and prioritize the results - what is revelation, what is ego, what is fear, what is pride and what is an asset.*
- . *Through the Fifth Step you will come to see yourself, possibly for the first time.*

In the Sixth Step you will realize what parts of you are either defective, or which are lacking, and become willing to have those defects and shortcomings removed.

In the Seventh Step you will take the same deep breath you took in Step Three to turn everything over to the High Power which you have come to believe. You will not tell that Higher Power what is to be removed or to be kept - you ask to have everything that stands in the way of your service to others removed.

In Step Eight you will return to this inventory - most people add to the list begun in Step Four - to determine how you and your disease have damaged the people, institutions and relationships around you. You will find that - if you are to stay sober - you are willing to do whatever is required to make those damages heal, or at least make it better.

And in Step Nine you will step back into the world to heal the damage of your past and establish a new foundation for life without the weight and, the guilt, the same, the fear and the selfishness of your past.

But none of this can begin without the thorough housecleaning required on Page 63 and 64 of the Big Book.

Prepare yourself for this process. Discuss your fears with your Sponsor. Gather your materials and begin.

Dr. Bob's Review

If you visit the home of Dr. Bob in Akron, one of the things you will find is a review of Steps One, Two and Three. It would be appropriate for you and your sponsor examine this document before you proceed to Step Four. If you cannot be content with the answers to this set of questions, you may need to go back to your earlier work before proceeding to Step Four.

STEP ONE (YES OR NO):

- (a) *Have you learned and have you fully conceded to your innermost self that you are an alcoholic?*
- (b) *Do you have any reservations or lingering ideas that one day you will be immune to or UNAFFECTED by drinking alcohol?*

STEP TWO (YES OR NO):

- (a) *Do you believe, or are you even willing to believe, that there is a power greater than you?*

STEP THREE (YES OR NO):

- (a) *Are you convinced about Steps One and Two?*
- (b) *Are you convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success?*
- (c) *Are you convinced that your troubles are basically of your own making, and that they arise out of you and that you are an extreme example of self will run riot?*
- (d) *Are you convinced that you must be rid of this selfishness?*
- (e) *Are you convinced that your selfishness is killing you?*
- (f) *Are you convinced that there is often no way of entirely getting rid of self without a higher power's aid?*
- (g) *Are you convinced that you must have a Higher Power's help?*
- (h) *Are you convinced that you have to quit playing the role of a Higher Power - that it never worked?*
- (i) *Are you convinced that a Higher Power is going to be your Director, Principle, Father and Employer?*
- (j) *Are you convinced that you have thought well about taking this Step?*

- (k) *Are you convinced that you can at last abandon yourself utterly to a Higher Power?*

Are You Ready To Take The 3rd Step Prayer?

"God I offer myself to Thee - to build with me and do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy power, Thy love, and Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always!"

Remember, the next paragraph on Page 63 says "The wording, of course, is quite optional." It is important that you mean what you pray. If you can take the words as presented and come to mean them, the prayer as written can work for you.

If, however, you find it hard to relate to the words as written, if you do not use "Thee" and "Thine" as part of your normal language, you can take the prayer and re-state it in your own words so that you can say a heart-felt prayer of surrender and willingness to proceed with your Recovery.

The Action of the Third Step

The Big Book says at the end of Step 3 (emphasis added):

"NEXT we launch out on a course of VIGOROUS action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision (Step 3) was a vital and crucial step (so it's important), it could have LITTLE PERMANENT EFFECT (it doesn't amount to much) unless AT ONCE (immediately or now) followed by a STRENUOUS EFFORT to face (where we face these things is in Steps 4 - 6), AND to be rid of (where we get rid of these things is in Steps 7 - 9), the things in ourselves which had been blocking us (we can't turn our will and our lives over to the care of God until we get unblocked from doing so by immediately and quickly working Steps Four through Nine. Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions.

Before he died, Dr. Bob told Bill "Keep it Simple." You can follow that in your Inventory.

The first thing you need to do is talk with your sponsor. Does your sponsor agree that you are ready to take this next step? Go through this booklet with your sponsor to be sure that

Preparation

he, or she, agrees with the process it presents. Your sponsor may have used a different system and if anything is found in these pages that is in conflict with your sponsor - go with the direction your sponsor gives you. Your sponsor knows you better than the authors of this booklet!

Get a notebook notebook to dedicate to your Inventory. It can be a simple spiral bound notebook, a composition book or other empty volume. You can usually find good ones in dollar stores, or you might have one left over from a previous "good intention" attempt at the Steps which is still blank and usable.

Get two or three reliable pens or pencils with you. The excuses "my pen stopped working" or "my pencil broke" will not be an available.

Have your own copy of the Big Book and, if your sponsor agrees, a copy of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

You sponsor may suggest a certain number of sessions per week - 20-60 minutes committed in advance. Your schedule may only allow one session per week or even time every day - make this decision with your sponsor.

Try to find a place where you can concentrate to work. It should be quiet - free of distractions but you will hear of people who worked at their inventories while the kids made noise else-

where in the house, or sitting in their car at a lake or wooded spot, or sitting in a coffee shop, or a public library or even a special "writing" meeting occasionally offered by individual AA groups. You will find you can complete your Inventory if your commitment is to finish and is not dependant on some condition you set before you begin.

When you sit down to write, be comfortable and take a few moments to be quiet. Pray and meditate as you feel is appropriate - you may be able to find the quiet you need in a few moments, or you may need ten or twenty minutes of prayer and meditation to begin.

Don't try to decide in advance what you should or should not write down - if you think of it, write it down.

If you are writing an inventory after a relapse, talk to your sponsor. Most sponsors tell a returning member of AA not to depend on the previous inventory (or inventories). The issues raised on those previous inventories were not handled by someone who stayed sober.

Remember, we can write too little for our Inventory, but we can never write too much.

NOTE:

Your Inventory is *not* a long narrative to explain everything. Your sponsor may (or may not) approve of you writing such a narrative as part of your recovery, but that is not your Inventory. The Inventory is clearly shown in the Big Book and this guide is to help you complete that process.

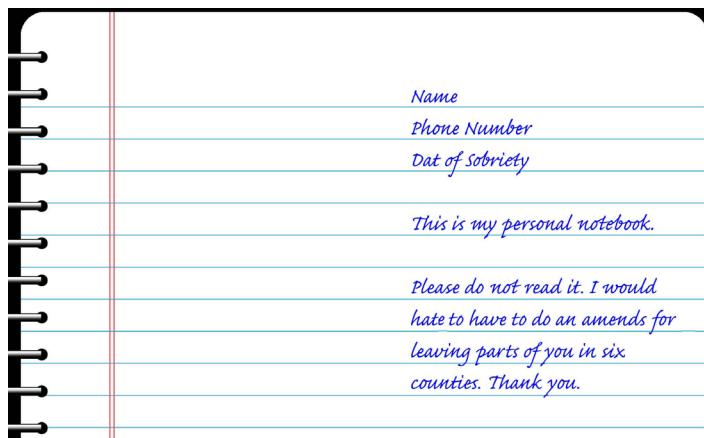
You may not like, agree with, understand, or want to do some of this work. We do not care what you like, agree with, understand or want to do ... we care what you do! What you like, agree with, understand or want to do is what brought you here.

This is the work you must do to stay sober. As the shoe company ad says -- "Just do it!"

Your Fourth Step Notebook

Page One

Open the notebook and on the first page write your name, how to contact you and whatever else your Sponsor feels you should put on that page. Sometimes that can include the date of sobriety, or a request that anyone finding your notebook not read it - almost everyone doing an Inventory chooses to keep their unfinished inventory under lock and key.



The Two Page Spread

When you open the notebook you have a two page spread in front of you. Use that to your advantage.

On the right side, draw a line approximately in the middle.

On the right side, use the basic red-line margin as your first column.

You will do several sections of the inventory, but under each section you will follow the same format. On each section you work down the column, not across.

Take that deep breath again, become calm and put your pencil to the paper...

Names

[insert column one graphic]

On the left side of the red margin, write the first name of the person who appears on your Inventory. Work down, not across.

Write a name, skip a line, write a name, skip a line, write a name... It does not matter how much you feel about this person, institution or situation - write a name, skip a line, write a name, skip a line.

If you have someone special that you have a lot to write about - write a name, skip a line, write a name, skip a line, write a name.

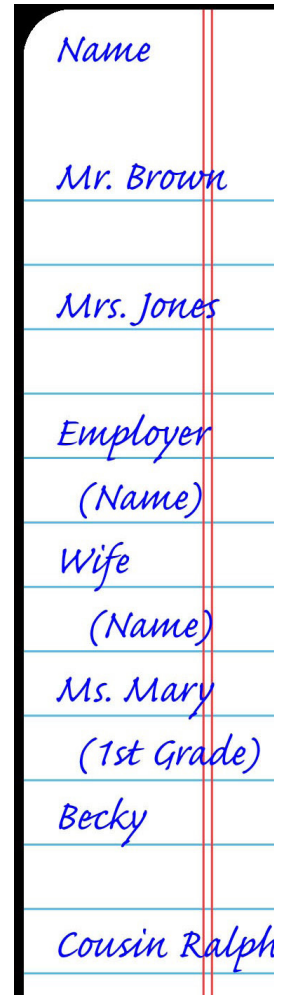
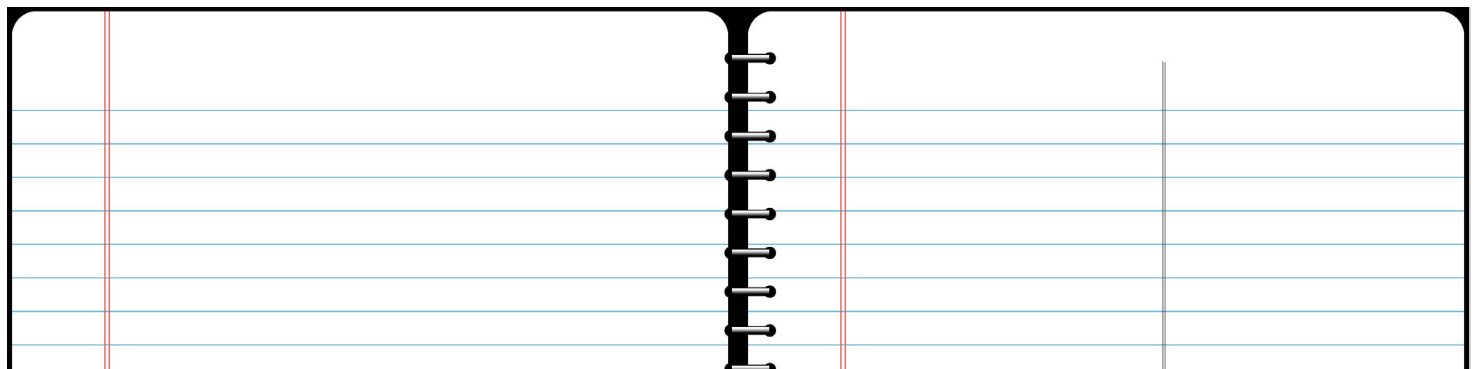
That is not a suggestion - that is a direction. You will see why we do this in the next stage.

You will do several lists. You will list your resentments. You will list your fears. You will list your sexual misconduct.

For each section, you will write a name, skip a line and write a name.

Some names may appear on more than one list.

When you can look at the list for 15 or 20 minutes and not come up with a new name, then you are ready to do the next column.

Why Are They On Your List?

Why they are on your list should be considered and the shortest possible statement will cut to the core of your reaction to them and what they did, or that you may think they did.

Look closely at the sample on Page 65 in the Big Book (shown below). The name with the longest reason for being on the list uses only 19 words. We are learning to discipline ourselves instead of “explaining.” When you write more about why they are on your list, you begin explaining why they are wrong and why you were right, or however you try to manipulate your audience.

<i>I'm resentful at:</i>	<i>The Cause</i>	<i>Affects my:</i>
Mr. Brown	His attention to my wife. Told my wife of my mistress. Brown may get my job at the office.	Sex relations. Self-esteem (fear) Sex relations. Self-esteem (fear) Security. Self-esteem (fear)
Mrs. Jones	She's a nut—she snubbed me. She committed her husband for drinking. He's my friend. She's a gossip.	Personal relationship. Self-esteem (fear)
My employer	Unreasonable—Unjust — Overbearing — Threatens to fire me for drinking and padding my expense account.	Self-esteem (fear) Security.
My wife	Misunderstands and nags. Likes Brown. Wants house put in her name.	Pride—Personal sex relations— Security (fear)

We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully. The first thing ap-

No more than 19 words per name in the corresponding second column. That is not a suggestion, that is a rule. You write a *maximum* of 19 words per name.

What matters is *your* perception and what *you* thought and did.

When you have your list of names, you will be tempted to write a long narrative of how they have wronged you. Your sponsor may decide you should write such a narrative - but that is not your Inventory. That is a long narrative of how the world has wronged you - and it will not keep you sober!

For your inventory you need to identify exactly why each of these names have appeared on your list, and do so in a clear and simple manner. Think of it as a report - “just the facts.” What would someone in that room seen?

You may want to tell what someone else thought or wanted. Don't do it. You do not know what someone else thought or

wanted - even if they told you, they might have been lying. You don't know.

In this example the one who has the most written gets just 19 words. If we are following the directions, you should be able to state, in 19 words or less, exactly why they are on your list.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Why on the list (19 words MAXIMUM)</i>
Mr. Brown	His attention to my wife; told my wife about my mistress;; Brown may get my job at the office.
Mrs. Jones	She's a nut - snubbed me. She committed her husband for drinking, he's my friend. She's a gossip.
Employer (Name)	Unreasonable - Unjust - Overbearing. Threatens to fire me for dinking and padding my expense account.
Wife (Name)	Misunderstand and nags. Likes Brown. Wants house put in her name.
Ms. Mary (1st Grade)	Made fun of my voice in front of the class.
Becky	Laughed at me in front of my friends in cafeteria. Gave me the nickname "Squirrely"
Cousin Ralph	Had better toys than me, wouldn't share them or let me take any home.

When you write the reason for the name being on our list, you are to tell us what happened. This column is reporting - even the phrase like “she's a nut” might be allowed if that is why she is on your list, even if you aren't qualified to make a determination of another person's sanity. Write no more than 19 words, no matter what. Do not explain, just say why they are on your list.

Don't rush it, but don't drag your feet.

What Does It Affect

Here is your chance to tell what that person, ideal, institution or situation threatened.

Was it your personal standing or position?

Your Pride?

<i>Affects my ...</i>
Sex relations, self-esteem (fear)
Security
Personal relationships, self-esteem (fear)
Self esteem (fear) , security
Pride - Personal sex relations
Security (fear)
Pride, self-esteem, relationships with classmates.
Pride, self-esteem, relationship with my friends.
Greed, Pride, Envy, felt I did not deserve nice toys.
Pride, fear, how my parents

Your financial security?
 Your self esteem?
 The way it caused other people to view you?
 Your sexual relationships?
 Your business relationships or friendships?
 Your legal position?
 Your criminal activities?
 Your fear?

Do you have something that was affected that is NOT listed in the examples. Later in this booklet you will find a list of suggestions from the One Way Group in Los Angeles from around 1960. They may help you fill out your third column.

On Sex

You are expected to list your resentments, your fears, and your sexual conduct. You will also deal with people you have harmed (Step 8).

For your Sex Inventory use the same format: two-page spread with a line down the middle of the second page.

Work down, not across.

Write a name, skip a line, write a name (or some indicator), even if you can't think of the specific name of the person involved.

When you can look at your list for 20 minutes without thinking of another name, start the next column.

Use no more than 19 words to explain why they are on your list.

Write what it effects.

Leave Column Four blank for the moment.

On page 70 the Big Book says,

“To sum up about sex: We earnestly pray for the right ideal, for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing. If sex is very troublesome, we throw ourselves the harder into helping others. We think of their needs and work for them. This takes us out of ourselves. It quiets the imperious urge, when to yield would mean heart-ache.”

Column Four

Column Four will take up the last column of your two-page spread. Leave this column blank until you get together with your sponsor for your Fifth Step.

Assets

Following the directions means following all of the directions. For your inventory this will include your Assets.

A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking complete inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade.

The purpose of doing an inventory of your Assets is not to give you a chance to reduce the impact of your fears, your resentments, your sexual conduct or the people you have harmed.

In the same way people may use the “Seven Deadly Sins” as a guide to their defects, it may be appropriate to use the “Seven Heavenly Virtues” in relation to your Assets. This is a simple list and may be outside your spiritual structure - it is intended as focus for your Inventory. All of the world’s faiths and codes of ethics have similar lists of goals and positive attributes we try to achieve.

Chastity - This is not simply the maintaining of sexual virginity until marriage, but also your conduct in all areas of sex. Did you lie for sex, manipulate, cheat on your spouse or otherwise place your personal desire over your behavior.

Temperance - This is not simply avoiding alcohol - which we have admitted to failure in our participation in our First Step. This idea is the ability to be moderate in all areas - food, righteousness, pride, sex, possessions, etc. Were you temperate in any of the areas of your life.

Charity - Did you care for others with your time, resources and affections, or did you give to get? Was your generosity based on helping the other person or institution, or on what benefit you would receive in pride, goods, services, recognition or reputation?

Dilligence - Did you complete what you began? Did you complete work or projects only so far as your return was concerned? Do you have a long list of accomplishments or a trail of broken promises - of beginnings without completion?

Patience - Could you wait for things to turn out or did you push, become frustrated, manipulate, demand? Was your patience complete or measured to the level of getting what you wanted?

	Assets
	Leadership
	Friendship
	Compassion
	Love
	Organization
	Desire to learn
	Nurturing

Kindness - Were you kind? To others? To strangers? To animals? To children - your own and others? Was your kindness followed with gossip or back-biting? Was it done to feel or show your superiority? Was the focus of your kindness on others or on yourself?

Humility - Were you able to go unrecognized and be satisfied that the right thing was done? Did you want or demand that people recognized your actions and that credit was not assigned to someone other than you.

Gifts

Did you have Gifts? These would be abilities that just seemed to come easily to you in the way of talent, understanding or intuition. Did you share those gifts for the benefit of others or did you use them to manipulate events to your own ends?

If you were given the gift of Leadership, did you use it to Lead and benefit those who would follow, or did you use it to grab as much as you could or get other people to do what you wanted them to do?

If you could Comfort, did you withhold that comfort until your target gave you what you wanted or provided something you could use to satisfy your own greed or desire before you would use your gift?

Did you have talents in areas that brought benefit or comfort to others? Music? Counseling? Cooking? Organizing? Did you use these talents to your own ends or the benefit of others?

Was your Asset something that was a benefit to those around you or used as a weapon to control situations and people to feed your own desires?

Use a fresh page in your notebook and write a list of assets, gifts or talents or abilities you feel you have been given. What have you been given the talent to do.

As you did with your Names, work down the column.

Beside each Asset, write how you have used it.

The purpose of knowing your Assets is to show where you have been given a gift, and where you have abused that gift in the course of your Alcoholism.

If you identify an Asset that you have used correctly - *do not try to "fix" it!* Be grateful and, when the time comes, be ready to turn that asset over to your Higher Power to allow it to benefit those you would help.

It is the nature of alcoholics in the throes of the disease to injure and abuse other people and to lessen and abuse themselves in the constant struggle for more of everything. We demanded more money, sex, power, prestige, possessions or satisfaction but no matter how great our acquisitions, we are never satisfied.

We take more pride in our ability to be more defective than others and judge everything about ourselves as defective.

In the Ninth Step promises we are told:

"No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others."

Judgement

One of the most important lessons we learn is that our judgement of others, or ourselves, has been damaged by our disease. What we consider our most wonderful feature may turn out to be damaging to other people. We find that our worst history becomes our greatest asset in helping others.

At this point we not only need to work at our willingness to have our defects removed and our shortcomings corrected, but become willing to use our assets as they were intended – for the benefit of others – or to let them go.

Accepting that we have had assets, and that we have not used those assets properly, is a final phase in becoming willing to have the High Power we found in Steps Two and Three take over everything in our lives.

Our defects. Our shortcomings. Our assets.

Everything.

Inventory Prompts

These are prompts to help you think of topics during your inventory. These are drawn from the One Way Group of Los Angeles with additional items drawn from talks by speakers on <http://www.xa-speakers.org>.

People Prompts

- ☐ Father *
- ☐ Mother *
- ☐ Brother *
- ☐ Sister *
- ☐ Grandmother *
- ☐ Grandfather *
- ☐ Aunt *
- ☐ Uncle *
- ☐ Cousin *
- ☐ Grandparents
- ☐ In-Laws
- ☐ Spouse
- ☐ Clergy
- ☐ Police
- ☐ Lawyers
- ☐ Judges
- ☐ Doctors
- ☐ Employer,
Employee's, Co-
Workers
- ☐ Creditors
- ☐ Teachers
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Acquaintances
- ☐ Girl/Boy Friends
- ☐ Parole Officers
- ☐ Probation Officers
- ☐ AA Friends
- Plus others not listed

* Natural, Step, Foster or
Guardian

Institutions

- ☐ Marriage
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Church
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Races
- ☐ Law
- ☐ Authority
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Education System
- ☐ Correctional System
- ☐ Mental Health
System
- ☐ Philosophy
- ☐ Nationality
- Plus others not listed

Principles

- ☐ God-Deity
- ☐ Retribution
- ☐ Ten
Commandments
- ☐ Jesus Christ
- ☐ Satan
- ☐ Laws
- ☐ Rules
- ☐ Death
- ☐ Life After Death
- ☐ Heaven
- ☐ Hell
- ☐ Adultery
- ☐ Golden Rule
- ☐ Seven Deadly Sins
- ☐ Social Responsibility
- Plus others not listed

Fears Prompts

- ☐ God
- ☐ Dying
- ☐ Insanity
- ☐ Rejection
- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Disease's
- ☐ Alcohol
- ☐ Drugs
- ☐ Relapse
- ☐ Sex
- ☐ Sin
- ☐ Self-Expression
- ☐ Authority
- ☐ Heights
- ☐ Unemployment
- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Losing A Spouse
- ☐ Losing A Child
- ☐ Animals
- ☐ Insects
- ☐ Police
- ☐ Jail
- ☐ Doctor's
- ☐ Stealing
- ☐ Creditors
- ☐ Being Found Out
- ☐ Homosexuals &
Lesbians
- ☐ Failure
- ☐ Success
- ☐ Responsibility

- ☐ Physical Pain
- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Drowning
- ☐ Men
- ☐ Women
- ☐ Being Alone
- ☐ People
- ☐ Crying
- ☐ Poverty
- ☐ Races
- ☐ The Unknown
- ☐ Abandonment
- ☐ Intimacy
- ☐ Disapproval
- ☐ Rejection
- ☐ Confrontation
- ☐ Sobriety
- ☐ Hospitals
- ☐ Responsibility
- ☐ Feelings
- ☐ Getting Old
- ☐ Hurting Others
- ☐ Violence
- ☐ Writing Inventory
- ☐ Being Alive
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Gangs
- ☐ Gossip
- ☐ Wealthy People
- ☐ Guns
- ☐ Change

Plus others not listed.

Sex Prompts

- ☐ Indecent Exposure
- ☐ Abortion
- ☐ Adultery
- ☐ Animal Sex
- ☐ Incest
- ☐ Sadism (Mental or
Physical pain on
others)
- ☐ Masochism (Mental
or Physical pain on
self)
- ☐ Rape (Statutory or
Forced)
- ☐ Same Sex
- ☐ Any deviation from
normal.
- ☐ Molesting
- ☐ Pornography
- ☐ Prostitution
- ☐ Fraud Sex (False
Promises)
- ☐ Masturbation
- ☐ Arson (Re: desire)
- ☐ Sexual Repression
- ☐ Fetish
- ☐ Transvestism

Plus others not listed.

*Dear God, please help me to see what You want
for me regarding relationships with others and
my sex life.*

Step Five

"This is the step that separates the men from boys" (or the girls from women). Step Five breaks the pattern of secrets and isolation that have kept us drunk and held down by our disease."

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Page 63

Your Sponsor is one of the tools of the program and like any tool it will not help you if you do not use it appropriately. Your Sponsor will give you some directions on how your Fifth Step will be conducted - the place, time, duration and process.

Most Fifth Steps are done with the Sponsor and the person whose Fifth Step is being heard separated from distractions. Your Sponsor may want you to go to a special location (your home, the Sponsor's home, a peaceful outdoor location, etc.) to get this personal time - the goal is to remove distractions so you can concentrate on the work of breaking the lifetime habit of keeping the secrets and hiding the truth from yourself and others.

This is when you will use Column Four on your Inventory. It is commonly called "What is Your Part?"

Before taking Step Five we are given some specific directions to review our work so far.

"If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot. We have listed and analyzed our resentments. We have begun to comprehend their futility and their fatality. We have commenced to see their terrible destructiveness. We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all men, even our enemies, for we look on them as sick people. We have listed the people we have hurt by our conduct, and are willing to straighten out the past if we can." From Page 70

"When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time. We have a written inventory and we are prepared for a long talk. We explain to our partner what we are about to do and why we have to do it. He should realize that we are engaged upon a life-and-death errand. Most people approached in this way will be glad to help; they will be honored by our confidence." From Page 75.

There is no "perfect" Fourth Step - the World Service Office is not reserving a special niche for your inventory to show the world how an inventory should be done. You do your Fourth the very best you can do it and - most often - will find that there is enough relief from the past to move forward with your Recovery.

There is only one way to do it wrong - to not do it.

Your Sponsor will probably ask questions to clarify some of the points you have written - it will be your opportunity to give more detail on the 19 words you were allowed for anything on your list.

You may be directed to write into the fourth column of the inventory to identify the exact nature of the problem. What was

your part in this entry on the Inventory? What does it tell you about yourself, your personal defects or shortcomings?

A Sponsor will usually tell you something of their own story to show how they have had to deal with items from their own Inventory to give you a real example of how a similar problem was handled in the Sponsor's own inventory. Your Sponsor will also guide you away from focus on how others have harmed you, but how you have participated in the process of stepping on their toes and causing them to retaliate. Sometimes a Sponsor will need to point out when you have been taking something as a personal injury that was simply a fact of life affecting others at the same time.

On page 46 of the Twelve and Twelve it says

"The sponsor probably points out that the newcomer has some assets which can be noted along with his liabilities. This tends to clear away morbidity and encourage balance. As soon as he begins to be more objective, the newcomer can fearlessly, rather than fearfully, look at his own defects."

You do not need to understand the process - this is not about building your intellectual strength, but getting down to the basic, honest feelings that have been the foundation of your resentments, fears and relationships.

Let your Sponsor guide you and know that there is nothing on your list that does not have a name - and a name means someone else has done it, felt it or had to deal with it. You are not alone.

It is important that you not try to do a Fifth Step alone. You use an Inventory to focus on your own problems - not the defects of the names on your lists. It is for you, your discovery of your own defects and shortcomings, your own spiritual journey and cleaning your side of the street.

You will most likely think of more to go on an inventory after you do your Fifth Step and it doesn't matter what you call the continuation of your Inventory. The Tenth Step says "Continued to take personal inventory..." so you might want to look at additions as part of your Tenth Step or a new Fourth Step.

You may find there is a particular area of your life where you want to focus on a new inventory - your marriage, secret crimes (such as stealing, hidden judgements, gossip, withholding care or money or connection with children or parents, etc.). Discuss these with your Sponsor to determine the best way to approach such new house-cleanings.

The only thing that matters is doing the Work and putting pen to paper. Just do it. Your Fourth Step is a real milestone in your commitment and progress to your Recovery.

Step Six

The Big Book only gives one paragraph on Step Six and, while the Twelve Steps and Twelve Tradition gives further instructions, this Step requires you to review you in the first five Steps to find out what your Inventory has revealed - or confirmed - about your own problems.

“Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for a hour, carefully reviewing what we have done. We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better. Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last.”

“Is our work solid so far?”

“Are the stones properly in place?”

“Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation?”

“Have we tried to make mortar without sand?”

Pages 87-88

The Big Book frequently uses terms “short-comings” and “defects”. One way to look at these problems is to define them, even if Bill did not write the definitions in the Big Book, several other people have provided definitions over the years.

For our purpose, let us think of a “shortcoming” as something you need to have but do not have enough of (such as honesty, integrity, tolerance, love, charity, forgiveness, etc.).

A “defect” can be thought of as something you have, but is either wrong, damaged, or being used to make it a weapon to cause damage to others.

Both of these problems need to be cleared, but first you must know what is true about yourself, even if it means losing some of the old comfort of your victim-hood, your righteousness, your belief that you were right or that you had the ability to define the world or other people.

The purpose is to see your own real problems - the thing that either led you to drink or to find comfort in alcoholic numbness and oblivion.

In your inventory you found things of value - the Big Book tells us to inventory *everything*, including our assets. Assets are not there for us to take comfort that we still have something worth keeping - assets are things we have the ability to do but

which we may not have used properly or something that we do well that will be of use in our new purpose:

“Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.”

(Page 89)

The challenge of Step Six is to look at our own desire to hold onto a defect because of the benefit we receive from it – and we have manipulated well known human flaws, from Seven Deadly Sins to our own special flaws, to serve our desires and selfish goals.

Are you willing to live a life, striving to be an Honest adult, unlike what you have done before you entered your Recovery?

Are you willing to stop gossip? This means repeating things you did not experience, based on the hearsay of other people, or “improving” the story to make it clear to others what you want it to say?

Are you willing to stop telling lies, even if the truth doesn’t make people think what you want them to think?

If you give up greed, are you afraid you will lose motivation to make a living or not get things you think you deserve?

If you have been known for sloth, or procrastination, are you willing to do the job required instead of teaching people to not expect you to work?

If your wrath is removed, how will you feel with situations when you feel you have been wronged? Are you willing to live by the same rules you expect of the people around you?

Can you live without your “Righteous Indignation” when you are positive that the other side is wrong and that you may not win? Even at work? Even in politics? Even in questions of religion?

If you succeed in surrendering your Pride, will you be unable to feel satisfaction from your accomplishments?

Step Six prepares you for the work of Step Seven, which requires that you be willing to have god take over everything in your life to heal your problems and make you the person you have the capacity to be.

The goal is to prepare you to be a whole, healthy, emotionally sober, happy human being.

Step Seven

Step Seven may not be what we expected when we began. It is not coming up with a list of things we want god to fix and then putting in our service order to have the changes made to our specifications.

On page 76 we are given what many people call the Seventh Step Prayer:

“When ready, we say something like this:

“My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.”

As with with the Third Step Prayer, the opening line of that quote gives you authority to use the wording you need to say achieve the required surrender of the Seventh Step. You need to say what you mean and mean what you say, 100%.

But many people miss that the Third Step Prayer does not end with “amen” and that the Seventh Step Prayer does. This is because they are an enveloping prayer. The prayer that begins Step Four and ends Step Seven is one Prayer.

Together they read:

“God I offer myself to Thee - to build with me and do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy power, Thy love, and Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always! My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my

fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.”

Even if you need find other wording to be more appropriate, are you in full agreement with the terms of this Prayer?

Are you willing to turn everything over to God or Higher Power of your understanding, holding nothing back?

Are you sure you have not deceived yourself by withholding some detail of your past, our desires, your plans or your expectations of how your life and Recovery are supposed to unfold?

This step is complete surrender. We were told

“The results were nil until we let go absolutely.”

Page 58

In the beginning we said we were willing to go to any lengths for victory over alcoholism.

This the the length to which we go.

We try to clean house to the best of our ability, knowing that we will continue cleaning for as long as we live.

We strive to be honest in our dealings with those around us, with ourselves, with our past and with our Higher Power.

We work for progress, knowing we will never attain perfection.

Can you confirm to yourself that you have, to the best of your ability, done the work intended behind the prayer?

If you believe you have done the best you can do to this point, knowing you may improve later, you are ready to move into the work of Steps Eight and Nine.

Use this list as a quick review of the process outlined in this booklet.

Inventory Summary

USE YOUR SPONSOR

- *If your Sponsor wants to do anything differently, go with your Sponsor's direction! You Sponsor knows you as an individual. Your Sponsor may have tools not included in this booklet.*
- *Steps One, Two and Three - Do Dr. Bob's Review*
- *Get a Notebook and writing gear.*
- *Set a committed schedule (time, day, hours per week, etc.) and then stick to it. Discuss your time commitment with your Sponsor.*
- *Write your personal information on Page 1.*

STEP FOUR

- *Pray before you begin each session - get quiet and do whatever your personal spiritual practice suggests.*
- *Pages two and three are the first two-page spread. Draw a line down the right page approximately in the middle.*
- *Begin on the left side of the left page margin line to serve as Column One and begin to write names - people, places, institutions, principles, etc. If it comes to mind, write it down. Even if you covered something on a previous inventory - if it comes up write it down!*
- *Write a name, skip a line, write a name, skip a line - no matter how dramatic or complex you feel that entry to be.*
- *Always work down, not across.*
- *When you cannot think of a name to add to Column One for 20 minutes, begin Column Two.*
- *Column Two will have why this name is on your list. Do not use more than 19 words. If you think of a new name for your list in Column One while doing Column Two, write it at end of your current list of names.*
- *When you have completed the list of names with entries in Column Two, go to Column Three.*
- *Go down the list and read Column One, the item in Column Two related to Column One, and write down in Column Three what this effected. Describe what it effected in your own words - the Seven Deadly Sins or other list. These must mean something to you, personally.*
- *Hold Column Four until you sit down with your Sponsor for Step Five.*
- *On a new page, list your Assets the same way you listed the names in the previous section of the Inventory.*
- *When you can look at the list for ten minutes and not come up with another asset, start the second column of how you have used, or abused, that gift. Keep the entries in this column to a maximum of 19 words.*

Step Five

- *Let your Sponsor (or the other person with whom you are doing a Fifth Step) set the time, location and conditions of your Fifth Step. You may want to have a soda, bottle of water or coffee pot available, and may want to plan on sharing a meal if the Fifth will take a long time. Your Fifth (Step may require more than one session, but usually the full Fifth can be done in a single face-to-face session.)*
- *Pray before you begin your Fifth, or whatever your Spiritual practice requires.*
- *As you and your Sponsor discuss the first three columns, write into Column Four exactly what your part was in the item under discussion.*
- *You may want a 2nd page to write a list of recurring defects that come up during your Fifth Step. You may need to keep yet another page available to list items that will be required for your Eighth Step - the things for which you must make amends.*
- *Listen to your Sponsor - a Sponsor's experience will be your strongest guide as to how you can deal with your own history.*
- *When you have completed Column Four, discuss what the results will mean for your recovery - what you have learned.*
- *End your Fifth Step with a Prayer or meditation before you leave to do the first hour of your Sixth Step.*

STEP SIX

- *Review your Fifth Step, particularly Column Four, and spend a quiet hour meditating on what you have learned about yourself.*
- *Consider the benefits you get from the defects, shortcomings and the abuse of assets you have identified in your Inventory. Are you willing to surrender those manipulated benefits in favor of have your Higher Power be in charge of your life and rewards? Are you willing to simply do what you are supposed to do without satisfaction of your desires, damage to others or as part of your selfish behaviors?*

STEP SEVEN

- *Pray the full 3rd and 7th Step Prayers, with the personal words necessary for you to mean your prayer. If your belief has other practices or rituals to serve this purpose, do those.*
- *Remember this is not a one time action, but continue to look for your own selfishness, defects, shortcomings or abuse of your gifts and remain willing to surrender those actions.*

Continue Your Inventory as Needed.